

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Ryan Flandro on January 25, 2010.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 30 (amended): A method for extruding a peroxide crosslinked polymer tube, comprising:

supplying a mixture to a screw extruder, the mixture comprising: a crosslinkable polymer, a crosslinking agent, and a stabilizing agent, wherein the polymer has a crystallite melting point and a crosslinking temperature, and wherein the screw extruder is a conically tapered screw extruder having at least two sections of differing spiral pitch;

heating the mixture in the screw extruder with an external heating unit to a temperature above the crystallite melting point but below the crosslinking temperature;

controlling the temperature of the mixture in the screw extruder with the external heating unit and an internal cooling unit;

continuously feeding the mixture from the screw extruder to an extrusion die, wherein a melting pressure before entry to the extrusion die is approximately 700-1500 bar;

heating the mixture in the extrusion die above the crosslinking temperature to effect at least a partial crosslinking of the polymer in the extrusion die, wherein the temperature (°C) of the mixture in the extrusion die is at least 15% above the crosslinking temperature (°C); and

discharging the mixture from the extrusion die, wherein the degree of crosslinking of the polymer on discharge from the extrusion die is above 60%.

Claims 4-6, 8-12, 15, 16, and 30-32 are allowed. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art of record does not teach or suggest a method for extruding a peroxide crosslinked polymer tube comprising supplying a mixture comprising a crosslinkable polymer, a crosslinking agent, and a stabilizing agent to a screw extruder and extruding the mixture in a conically tapered screw extruder having at least two sections of differing spiral pitch wherein the temperature of the mixture in the screw extruder is controlled with an external heating unit and an internal cooling unit and wherein a melting pressure before entry to the extrusion die is approximately 700-1500 bar and including the degree of crosslinking upon discharge from the extrusion die is above 60% in combination with the other features instantly claimed.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JEFFREY WOLLSCHLAGER whose telephone number is (571)272-8937. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday 6:45 - 4:15, alternating Fridays.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Christina Johnson can be reached on 571-272-1176. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jeff Wollschlager/
Primary Examiner
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January 29, 2010